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Consequences Of Speaking Without Knowledge

Speech is one of the most powerful actions a human being can perform. Through words, one can guide others to truth — or mislead them into falsehood. In Islam, the tongue is a trust, and every word a person utters is recorded. That is why speaking without knowledge is considered one of the most serious and dangerous actions a Muslim can commit.

Zidni Institute Team

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The Weight of Words in Islam

Allah has made it clear in the Qur'an that every word we say is monitored:

مَا يَلْفِظُ مِن قَوْلٍ إِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيبٌ عَتِيدٌ

"Man does not utter any word except that with him is an observer prepared [to record]."

— [Qur'an 50:18]

And the Prophet ﷺ said:

"Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him speak good or remain silent."

— Sahih al-Bukhari & Muslim

Islam teaches that silence is often better than speaking — unless the words bring about benefit based on sound knowledge. This principle is especially important when it comes to religious matters.

Speaking About the Religion Without Knowledge

One of the gravest sins in Islam is speaking about the religion without knowledge. Allah mentions this in the Qur'an:

وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَا تَصِفُ أَلْسِنَتُكُمُ الْكَذِبَ هَٰذَا حَلَالٌ وَهَٰذَا حَرَامٌ لِّتَفْتَرُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ ۚ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَفْتَرُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ لَا يُفْلِحُونَ

"And do not say about what your tongues assert of untruth, 'This is lawful and this is unlawful,' to invent falsehood about Allah. Indeed, those who invent falsehood about Allah will not succeed."

— [Qur'an 16:116]

And in another verse, Allah lists speaking without knowledge among the most prohibited acts:

قُلْ إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ رَبِّيَ الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ وَالْإِثْمَ وَالْبَغْيَ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَأَن تُشْرِكُوا بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزِّلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا وَأَن تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

"Say, "My Lord has only forbidden immoralities - what is apparent of them and what is concealed - and sin, and oppression without right, and that you associate with Allah that for which He has not sent down authority, and that you say about Allah that which you do not know.""

— [Qur'an 7:33]

Speaking About the Religion Without Knowledge

This includes issuing fatwas without knowledge, interpreting Qur'anic verses incorrectly, making up rulings, or attributing sayings to the Prophet ﷺ without verifying their authenticity.

"Whoever (intentionally) ascribes to me what I have not said then (surely) let him occupy his seat in Hellfire."

[Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, Sahih al-Bukhari 109]

The Consequences of Speaking Without Knowledge

1. Misguidance for Oneself and Others

When someone speaks without knowledge, they risk not only falling into misguidance but also dragging others along with them. The person becomes a cause of confusion, misunderstanding, or innovation in the religion.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

"Whoever introduces into this affair of ours that which is not from it, it is rejected."

— Sahih al-Bukhari & Muslim

2. Bearing the Sin of Others

If someone misguides others through false speech, they carry their own sin and the sin of those who followed them based on that misinformation.

لِيَحْمِلُوا أَوْزَارَهُمْ كَامِلَةً يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ۙ وَمِنْ أَوْزَارِ الَّذِينَ يُضِلُّونَهُم بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ ۗ أَلَا سَاءَ مَا يَزِرُونَ

"That they may bear their own burdens in full on the Day of Resurrection and also some of the burdens of those whom they misled without knowledge. Evil indeed is what they bear."

— [Qur'an 16:25]

The Consequences of Speaking Without Knowledge

The Prophet ﷺ said:

"Whoever calls to guidance, then he receives the reward similar to the reward of whoever follows him, without that diminishing anything from their rewards. And whoever calls to misguidance, then he receives of sin similar to the sins of those who followed him, without that diminishing anything from their sins."

— Jami' At-Tirmidhi

3. Earning the Anger of Allah

To speak about Allah or His religion without knowledge is a form of arrogance. It is placing one's opinion over revelation — and this invites the anger of Allah. The scholars of the past used to avoid answering questions unless they were sure. Even great Imams would say "I don't know" rather than speak without certainty.

4. Loss of Trust and Credibility

When a person is known to speak without knowledge, their words lose value — even when they may be right. People will begin to doubt their reliability, and their speech becomes a source of confusion instead of clarity. And this is not even the worst part, the person will lead them to think that what Islam teaches is false and they will end up distancing people from Islam.

The Consequences of Speaking Without Knowledge

5. Opening the Door to Innovation and Deviation

When people speak based on emotion, culture, or philosophy instead of divine guidance, it often leads to introducing new practices or beliefs into the religion. Over time, this can distort Islam entirely. Then whatever a person follows is not Islam anymore, but some newly invented religion, and when falsehood spreads, it is hard to repair the damage by us humans.

We ask Allah to protect us from being those who misguide others, Ameen!

Silence is Better than False Speech

In Islam, silence is not weakness. It is often a sign of humility, caution, and sincerity. If a person is unsure about an issue, they are rewarded for saying “I don’t know” and deferring to those with knowledge.

'A slave (of Allah) may utter a word which pleases Allah without giving it much importance, and because of that Allah will raise him to degrees (of reward); a slave (of Allah) may utter a word (carelessly) which displeases Allah without thinking of its gravity and because of that he will be thrown into the Hell-Fire.'

- Sahih Al Bukhari

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— Sahih Al Bukhari

The early scholars used to say:

“The one who answers all questions is insane.”

They understood the weight of religious speech and feared saying something that could lead people astray.

A Reminder to Seek Knowledge First

The correct path is to seek knowledge before speaking, especially about matters of belief, worship, and Islamic law. The religion is built on knowledge, not speculation or guesswork.

فَاسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِن كُنتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

“So ask the people of knowledge if you do not know.”
— [Qur’an 16:43]

This shows that Islam does not expect everyone to have all the answers — but it does expect responsibility, humility, and respect for the truth.

In an age where opinions are shared freely and instantly, the danger of speaking without knowledge has only grown. Social media, public platforms, and even casual conversations can become means of spreading misinformation if not grounded in authentic knowledge.

The Prophet ﷺ told us that the people will be in the Fire because of their tongues.

A Reminder to Seek Knowledge First

Narrated Mu'adh bin Jabal: رضي الله عنه:

"I accompanied the Prophet (ﷺ) on a journey. One day I was near him while we were moving so I said: 'O Messenger of Allah! Inform me about an action by which I will be admitted into Paradise, and which will keep me far from the Fire.' He said: 'You have asked me about something great, but it is easy for whomever Allah makes it easy: Worship Allah and do not associate any partners with Him, establish the Salat, give the Zakat, fast Ramadan and perform Hajj to the HOuse.' Then he said: 'Shall I not guide you to the doors of good? Fasting is a shield, and charity extinguishes sins like water extinguishes fire - and a man's praying in depths of the night.'" He said: "Then he recited: 'Their sides forsake their beds to call upon their Lord.' Until he reached: 'What they used to do.' [32:16-17] Then he said: 'Shall I not inform you about the head of the entire matter, and its pillar, and its hump?' I said: 'Of course O Messenger of Allah! He said: 'The head of the matter is Islam, and its pillar is the Salat, and its hump is Jihad.' Then he said: 'Shall I not inform you about what governs all of that?' I said: 'Of course O Messenger of Allah!'" He (ﷺ) said: "So he grabbed his tongue. He said 'Restrain this.' I said: 'O Prophet of Allah! Will we be taken to account for what we say?' He said: 'May your mother grieve your loss O Mu'adh! Are the people tossed into the Fire upon their faces, or upon their noses, except because of what their tongues have wrought'"

—Jami' At Tirmidhi

The wise believer thinks before speaking, asks before answering, and refrains from saying anything about the religion unless it is based on clear, authentic, and verified sources.

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Final Reminder

وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ ۚ إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَٰئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا

"And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge. Indeed, the hearing, the sight and the heart - all those will be questioned about it."

[Qur'an 17:36]

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